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UNCLAS KUWAIT 001147

SIPDIS

STATE FOR NEA/PPD, JGAFFNEY; NSC FOR MDUNNE

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [KPAO](#) [PREL](#) [OPRC](#) [OIIP](#) [KWWW](#) [IZ](#)

SUBJECT: PORTRAYAL OF THE WAR IN KUWAIT'S STATE MEDIA

1. After months of public hedging and equivocation for the benefit of the media and the Arab League, the GOK has come out in strong support for the war on Iraq, and Kuwaiti public opinion is following its lead. Embassy has received hundreds of calls expressing support from ordinary Kuwaitis, many of whom are leaving floral bouquets and letters at the embassy gate, and editorials overwhelmingly support the US and coalition attack. Not surprisingly, this perspective is reflected in Kuwait's state-run media.

2. Kuwait TV (KTV) and the Kuwait News Agency (KUNA) are the only government-controlled media in the country, and offer voluble support for coalition efforts. KTV, for example, regularly refers to the campaign as "the war to liberate Iraq." Illustrative of KTV's coverage is a series of interviews with Iraqi refugee families in Jordan entitled "Where Are We Now?" The families, living in squalid camp conditions, tell the interviewer it is better than what they experienced under Saddam's regime. KTV also has broadcast several interviews with Iraqi opposition figures, and both KTV and KUNA have focused in recent days on humanitarian aid efforts in Iraq, including a Kuwaiti aid shipment and assistance in extinguishing oil well fires in Iraq.

3. Although Kuwait's Arabic press is not government-owned or controlled, the same pro-war sentiment is evident in newspaper reportage and op/eds. Commentators harshly criticize Arab states and publics for attacking the coalition, and editorial opinion reflects bitterness that Arab public opinion offers no sympathy for Kuwait as a victim of Iraqi surface to surface missiles. In this context, there is no ambiguity about where the majority of Kuwaitis stand in terms of the war on Iraq, and no daylight between official and commercial media on the issue.

JONES